

GODLIE AND FRVITFVL TREA- TISES OF THE FOVLE

And Grosse sinne of
Oppression.

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THE ONE TAKEN OV T OF THE
Exposition vppon the fitt Chapter of
Nehemiah, written by that worthy Bishop
and faithfull PASTOR of the Church
of Durham, Master JAMES
PILKINTON.

The other published of late by ROBERT SOME
Doct̃or of Diuinitie.

Ecclesi. 7. 9. Oppression maketh a wise man madde.



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vniuersitie fo Cambridge.

1585.

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THE FORMER

TREATISE AGAINST THE
GROSSE SIN OF OPPRES-
SION TAKEN OVT OF THE

Exposition of *M. IAMES*

PILKINGTON vpon the 5.

Chapter of Nehemiah.

(*)

1. *And there was a great crie of the people made and their wines against their brethren the Iewes.*

WHile that *Nehemiah* had traueiled him selfe weary in keping watch and ward, and setting the people to building the walls againe, and thought all was quiet, both within the Citie, and safe against the vtter enemy, behold, now bursteth out a new fore, worse then
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the former. *The people and their wiues come with open mouth and make an outcry against the rich and Rulers among them, which unmercifully had spoyled and oppressed them, in so much as they were not able to liue.* Such is the state of Gods people here in the earth, that as our master Christ saith, *He came to ouerthrow the workes of the deuil:* so the deuil ceaseth not by al meanes possible to ouerthrow, or at the least, so much as in him is, to hinder by his partakers, the building of gods house, and the setting forth of his glorie. And to declare the vehemency of the crie, the holy Ghost noteth it by such a word in the Ebrew, as signifieth those vprores and outcries which are made in Rebellious or Seditious Riots, or els of such as crie out for great grief and anguish of heart. *The parties that make their crie, are the common people and women,* of which it is hard to tell, whether of them is often more importune in outcrying, and many times without iust cause. The people if they smart a litle, & haue not their owne wills fulfilled, are ready to exclaime, and women can weepe and howle when they list, & the basest sort are the worst. *The parties against whome they crie, be the lewes their countrie-men,* breethren in kindred, and professing one religion. If this oppression and cruel dealing had bene by straungers, where no mercie is commonly shewed nor looked for, it would haue

haue bene lesse marueiled at, & lesse it would haue greeued them: but to be entreated cruelly by their countriemen, kinsmen, and those that serued the same God, and professed the same Religion that they did, and at whose hands they looked for aid and comfort: this was thought so straunge, that it would make anie astonied to heare tell of it. With these circumstances the holy Ghost setteth out the greatnesse of the cry, to make it more horrible in mens sight, & so the more easilie to bring them to repentaunce, and make them ashamed of their cruel dealings. When the Deuill preuayled not by *Sanballat* and his fellowes, to ouerthrow the building, he setteth now on the poore common sort and women, to crie out against their Rulers, thinking by these meanes to ouerthrow all, rather then to procure anie remedie or reliefe for them: Though God of his accustomed goodnes (turning oft our wicked doings to the setting forth of his Glorie) by this meanes wrought their deliuerance and libertie. Such is the wisdom of our God, that by our foolishnes he declareth his mightie powre, wisdom, & maiestie: and our ill dealing sheweth forth his iustice and mercie, and that against our wil & meaning.

2. *And there were that said, our sonnss and our daughters and we are manie, therefore*

fore we must take Corne that we may eate
and liue.

2. *And there were that said.* The cause of their Crie is set forth in these 4. verses following: *Hunger, need, oppression, pinching pouertie, and pining penurie*, made them so to crie out. And this is to common a fault in our daies, in the preaching of the gospel. Some of the poorer sort, though they had not lands & goods, yet God, as he vseth commonlie, had blessed them more then the richer sort with children so manie, that they could not tell how to get bread for them, except they should sell them as slaues: And where they were free borne, they should now become bond, and be vsed as beastes. What a grieve it is to a good father, that loueth his childe deere lie, in the feare of God, to be driuen by the vnmercifull dealing of the rich to sell his owne children for bondmen, I leaue it to the consideratiō of those that be naturall and louing Parents. For none can expresse the greatnes of that grieve, but he that hath beene pinched with it, and felt the smart of it. When *Iacob* should send little *Beniamin* into *Egypt* with his brethren for corne, it was long ere he could be brought to it, and he almost had rather died for hunger, then let him goe from him. What a loue had *Dauid* toward his wicked sonne *Absolon*, euen in the midst of his Rebellion,

Rebellion, and what charge gaue he to his captaines, that they should not kill him? Such is the loue of naturall Parents towards their children, that they will loue them, and cannot cast them of, euen in their ill doings, though manie times the children be most vnthankesful. Libertie is a thing that euerie man naturallie desireth and by all meanes seeketh for, therefore bondage must needs be such a thing as euerie man doeth abhorre & flie from: yet *hunger* is such a thing, that it will breake stonie walls, and rather then a man will beare it continuallie, he will sell landes, goods, wife, children, yea him-selfe, to be slaues for euer. Nay *hunger* is so pinching a paine, that a woman will *eate her owne childe, as in the siege of Ierusalem, in Samaria, and Saguntine*; yea a man his owne flesh, rather then he will die for hunger. *Hunger* of all thinges maie not be abidden, what inconuenience soeuer fall out after. Consider then what miserable case these poore men were in, that had so manie children, and could get no bread to put in their mouthes: & wicked men, the richer sort, were they, that had brought them to this pouerty, and now would not releue them in this their extremitie. We read of a *Bishoppe of Mentz in Germanie called Hatto, who had great store of corne & would not relieue the poore with it in time of great dearth, but let the rats eate it: in reuenge of which, God*

raised so manie Rats about him, that they droue him from house to house to saue his life: and where he had a strong towre in the midst of the great riuer of Rhene, which yet standeth there to be seene in the midst of the riuer, he thought him selfe sure if he could flie thither: notwithstanding the Rats, swam after him thither, and there deuoured him: and it is called the Rats towre at this daie. Salomon saieth, he that hideth vp his corne, shalbe cursed among the people, but blessing shalbe on them that sell it, God graunt the richer sort pitifull hearts to open their barnes and pурсle to the reliefe of the poore, that they maie escape Gods plague and mans curse.

3. And there were some that said, our fields, and our vineyards, and our houses we haue laid to pledge, that we might haue Corne in this hunger.
4. And there were some that said: we haue borrowed onie of the Kings tribute vppon our landes and vineyards
5. And now as the flesh of our breethren is, so is our flesh: and as their children be, so are our children: and marke, we bring into bondage our sonnes and our daughters as seruants: and there besome of our daughters in bondage alreadie: and there is no powre in our hands: our lands & our vineyards are in other mens hands.

3. *And there were some that sayd.* Thus farre goeth the crie of the poorest sort: now followeth another company, that crie as fast, but they are not altogether so poore. They were pinched with hunger, but *they had some lands, vineyards, and houses to lay to pledge, that they might haue some corne to fill their bellies withall.* These men were hunger-bitten also: for though they had land, yet they were not able to store it, nor husband it, as husbandry required: and therefore had no profit by it. And like ynough they were such as *Aggeus* the Prophet complained on, saying: *that euery man buildeth for him-selfe faire houses, and Gods house lay vn-built, and therefore God plagued them.* They had sowed much, and reaped little, their corne wasted in their Barnes, and their grapes consumed awaie in the winepresse. These daies were like the time of *Micheas* the Prophet, who crieth out against the Rulers for their oppressing of the poore so extreamlie, saying, *they plucke of their skinner from them, Mich* and their flesh from their bones. And they eat also the flesh of my people, and flay of their skinner from them, and they breake their bones, and choppe them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron.

4. *And there were some that said.* Yet commeth another sort, but they were in some better case, for they had some corne, and

no money, and they crie out as fast as the rest. The Kings of *Persia*, although they had giuen the Iewes licence to goe home to build their Temple and Citie, yet they laid a great taske on them, which they should paie, in token of their subiection, and recompence for their liberties sake. The Rulers & chiefe of the Iewes had ingrossed vp in their hands vnmercifullie all the corne and money, that could be come by, so that litle or nothing could be gotten to fill their bellies, and to pay the kings tribute withall: therefore *these men must pledge their lands and vineyards to get some money for this purpose.* O miserable wretches, that had thus miserablie oppressed their poore breethren and councitmen, who had taken as much paines as they or more for the defence of their countrie, building of their Temple and Citie: and now in their great neede could finde no comfort nor reliefe at their hands. But these be no new things in the world: for *Amos* the Prophet complaineth likewise of the oppression, that the richer sort vsed toward the poore in his time. *When wil this moone passe away, saie they, that hath so much plentie: and the time come, that we may make the measure lesse, and buy the poore for siluer, and the needie for shoes, and sell the outcast of the wheat.*

5. And now as the flesh of our breethren is. But now come they all howling and crying together

ther, and saie, what better case are we in, that be come home to our countrie, then our brethren, which liue in captiuitie vnder the Chaldies, Affirians, Babylonians, Medes, & Persians, or any other countrie, where-soeuer they be scattred on the face of the earth. They liue in penury & hunger, & so do we. They be oppressed with their Rulers, & so be we. Their flesh is partched with toiling in the heat, and frozen vp with cold, and so is ours. Their bellies cleaue to the verie back for hunger, and so doe ours. Ther is no strength nor courage left in them, no more is there in vs. They be wearie of their liues, and so be we. They haue not where with to fil their bellie, and couer their back, & no more haue we. They pine away for sorow, and so doe we. They haue nothing left but skinn & bones, and those will scarfe cleaue together for sorow, and in the same case be we. If they get a pennie with great labour, one or other is readie to snatch it from them, and so it is with vs. As their children liue in as great flauerie and miserie as their fathers, so doe our children liue as miserable as we doe. There is no respect of age nor youth neither there nor here, but all kinds of sorow are laide vppon vs without mercie. If this sorow were laide on vs alone we could better beare it, but when we see our children, yong infants that cannot help them-selues, to
be

be wrapt in the same miserie that we be, and can help neyther them nor our selues, it doubleth and tripleth our sorow, and yet both is remediles, endles, and comfortles.

These be straunge things which were laid to their charge for their vngentle dealing: but loe, marke and consider farther, and these dealings that folow are much worse monsters in nature, and things intollerable, both afore God and man. This word *loe, marke or behold, Ecce*, euer betokneth throughout the scripture some notable thing eyther verie good or verie ill, that is spoken of immediatlie afterward, and such a one as commonlie falleth not out among men: And the holie Ghost of purpose vseth to marke such notable things with this word *Loe, Ecce, marke or behold* to put men in remembrance, and a wake them to the consideration of the weightie matter that followeth, that they should not lightlie passe ouer it, but deeplie marke & consider it. Marke the greatnes of this oppression and vnmmercifull dealing of the richer sort toward vs their poore breethren and countriemen, of the same religion, and seruing the same God: that they doe, & haue taken as much paines in building the Temple, Citie, and defending our countrie as they haue done, or more: and yet can finde no mercie at their hands, but are made their slaues. For *behold in straunge countries*

countries, where our breethren dwell, straungers take their sonnes and daughters by force and make them bond-men and slaues: but we are brought into such miserie, that we our selues are drinen by necessitie through the oppression of our rulers, against our will, and willingly to bring & offer our sonnes and daughters to them to be their bond-seruants, slaues, & vsed as beasts at their commaundement, that we & they may liue, though it be in great miserie, rather then perish for hunger or penury. And, that ye may see the thing to be true, and not feigned, some of our daughters are in bondage to them alreadie. It is a great grieve to parents, to see their owne Children taken by straungers & made slaues in their owne sight: but it is a greater grief for fathers to be so cruellie delt with in their owne countrie, at their friends hands and countrie-men, that they shall be compelled willinglie, though against their wills, to sell their children for slaues, or else die for hunger. At straungers hands, and speciallie if they be of another Religion, no man looketh for anie fauour, and if anie doe come, it is more then looked for, and so much the more welcome, when it commeth: but at a friend and countrie-mans hand, where all courtesie is to be looked for, and to finde none but all extremitie, it is a grieve aboue all griefes, and mans hart can neuer digest it. It is against God, against nature, and common reason

reason which teacheth all gentlenes to such: nay it is worse then beastlines: for one beast will not deale so cruellie with another of his owne kinde: and one theefe will not robbe another: therefore to be spoiled and robbed by them of whom they should be defended & releued, it is a griefe that passeth all sorowe. But if these sorowes could haue an end, or ther were anie hope to haue release of them in time we could take it the better, & haue some comfort: but all hope is taken away, for we haue no powre left, we haue nothing to help our selues withall, we haue wraстled as long as we might and made shift as long as it would be, but now we are able to beare it no more, we haue nothing left, all is spent and gone, and we cannot deuize where to get anie more: our houses, our lands and vineyardes other men haue cruellie gotten from vs, and vnmercifullie doe keepe them, & haue no regard to help vs in this our great and extreame necessitie. We can doe nothing, but cry out on heauē & earth, but they haue hardned their harts and stopt their eares that they will not heare nor pitie vs. Mercie is gone, crueltie, oppression, and greedines cary the away, that both forget god & them-selues. This was the miserable state of that time: a mā would haue thought that the miserie, slauerie, and bondage, that they them-selues were in of late, vnder heathen Princes, in straunge countries

countries, and so late being restored through gods free and vnderferued goodnes to their owne cuntrye, with libertie, great gifts and liberalitie, to build their temple & citie, should not haue bene so sone forgotten, but as they then would haue bene glad of some releefe, succour, & courtesie to be shewed vnto them at straungers hands, so they should now shew the like vnto their breethren & countrimen: but such is the wickednes of mans hart that the more mercies we receiue at Gods hand, the more vnthankfull we be: and such is the malice of *Sathan* against God, his Church, and people, that when the Lord of his owne free will and vnderferued goodnes bestoweth his mercie vpon his seruants, the Deuill by his members and all deuises possible, goeth about to ouerthrow and withdraw all sorts of men, so much as in him is, to a forgetfulnes of such mercifull goodnes bestowed vpon them, and maketh them vnmercifull to their breethren, which haue receiued so great mercie at the Lords hand. Religion is the chiefeest help that god hath giuen vs to knowe him by, to bridle our ill affections and desires withall, to make vs loue one another, and set forth his glorie: and yet if we looke into our selues in these daies, we shal finde that there was neuer greater crueltie, oppression of the poore, Hypocrisie, and dissembling in Gods cause,
and

and vnmercifulnes amongst men, in this land, then hath bene since the beginning of the reforming of Religion amongst vs: yea, and that is more wonderful, of such as would pretend to be fauourers of Religion. Hypocrites, as they vse nothing well, so they mis-use Religion, for a cloake to worke their owne will and pleasure by, to the defacing of all good Religion. Things be fresh in memorie, and cannot be forgotten of them that will not willinglie be blind: but they that list to reede, may see in that worthie Father Master *Latimer* his Sermons manie such things opened, that then were preached, & would to God they were now reformed, or not fallen to worse and more shameful dealings, without hope of amendement. As for begging or buiying good things at the Kings hand, then selling the woods, surueying the land, to the vttermost acre or roods of land, inhaunsing of rents to the highest, from twentie pounds to an hundreth, racking the Tenants by intollerable fines and Incomes, *Sine fine*, euerie 5. or 7. yeare commonlie, laying load on them, to carie and recarie what so euer is to be done, paying neuer a pennie for their labour, ride and runne when he is commaunded, &c. Then turne it into the Princes hand againe, get as much, and vse it as ill or worse, This practise hath bene so common,

and

and declared by diuers, that few can be ignorant of it, and manie crie out on it at this day, but remediles. Yet this is not the worst: if there beanie broken title of the land, that maie make question in the Law, or if there beanie daunger of waters or extraordinarie charges, reparations, &c. then it is meete for the Prince by exchange. When it is rackt to the highest, and a good thing gotten in steede of it, yet that the Prince shall not be thought to haue an ill bargaine, he will desire to be farmer of it him-selfe after the same rate, to stop mens mouthes for a time. As it is reason, honorable, and Godlie, that the Prince should liberallie reward and encourage the good serui- tor: so is it reason againe, that the Princes goodnesse, nor the subiect be misused. Master *Latimer* did freelie speake of these things, not without blame, as peraduenture this will be to: but would to God this had bene vsed only in the princes state: but he that wil looke and see, shall finde the like to common in meane mens doings. As for pulling downe of Townes, turning tillage to pasture, and turning out the tennants, as *Achab* did to *Naboth* for his vineyard, that they maie haue elbow rounge, make them large demeans, or set a shepheard and his dogg, where so manie haue dwelt, and that a poore man may not dwel so neere a man of worship: these be so

common among the meanest sort of Purchasers, that men neede not to studie where to finde them. Raising of Rents, & taking vnreasonable fines and gresssians, is thought no faulte, it is so common: but some are waxen so cunning, that it is straunge to thinke of. A land-lord is hungrie, and needes must haue fines euen of the poorest sort: and because he wil be thought to deale mercifullie, this waie is deuised. The poore man hath no money, and yet he must pay: his goods, and speciallie his sheepe, though they be few, shall be preised, and according to the rate, out of those goods the fine shalbe raised. And that some pitie shalbe thought to be shewed, the poore man shall haue his goods againe by the price, to pay his fine withall, and for occupying of those his owne goods, he shal pay a yearelie rent or interest, as it were an vsurie: and this dealing is thought greate courtesie. *Solon, when he was asked, why, among the other good lawes that he made, he made not one for him that killed his father? He answered, because he would not put men in remembrance, that there was any such a mischiefe, that could come into mens heads:* So I feare the opening of these things shall giue occasion to some ill men, but not to the good, to learne the like deuises. So readie we be to learne that that is ill. The law in deede openeth sin what it is, that a man should flie
from

from it, & not be condemned for ignorance. Saint Paul sayeth, *I had not knowne lust and desire of ill things to be sinne, except the law had said, thou shalt not lust nor desire them.* The law is not to blame in declaring what sinne is, that by knowing of it we may flie from it: no more then the Phisitian is to blame in opening the disease to his patient, and teaching him what things to auoid, that he may recouer health. But as an ill stomach, what good meat soeuer it eateth, turneth it into ill humors: and the Spider gathereth poyson on the same flowres that the Bee gathereth honie: So on the holie word of God & his blessed lawes, which he made for our health and saluation, ill men gather death and damnation, through their owne wickednesse, and no fault in the law nor law-maker. As the *Israelites* cried out in this time iustlie on their Rulers for this great oppression, so it is to be feared that in our daies there is no lesse cause to crie aloud, that God may heare, when man will not. There be four things that crie for vengeance out of heauen vnto the Lord, and the scripture vseth the same word of crying with them, which for memories sake are contained in these two verses:

Clamitat in cælum vox sanguinis, vox Sodomorum,

Vox oppressorum, mercesq; retenta laborum.

For murther and bloodshed God said to Cain, when he had killed his brother *Abel*, the voice of thy brothers blood crieth out from the earth to me in heauen. For the filthie incest, fornication, Pride, Glotonie, wealth, and Idlenes of *Sodom*, the Prophet *Ezechiel* and *Genesis* testifie saying; the crie of *Sodom* is come up to me. The *Israelites* oppressed in *Egypt* with making of brick, &c. God deliuered them when they cried vnto him, and drowned the oppressors. *S. James* sayeth, the wages withholden from those that reaped their fields, crie out vnto the Lord of hostes. These be good lessons for such as oppres the poore, or deale straightlie with their tennants, thinking they may vse them like slaues or beasts at their pleasure. Though they be seruants here, yet they be children of the same God, and bought by the same price that their masters be: & therefore ought of dutie to be vsed with Christian and brotherlie charitie, as thou wouldst be, if thou were so. There be other sorts of cruell oppressours, but not so common as these: As cose-ning, by cunning dealing to creep into mens bosomes, to be Feoffies of trust, Executors of will, Gardians of infants, and these plaie best be trust, but they trust them-selues best and goe awaie with all. Cariers of corne, victuals, and other commodities out of the realme, to make a dearth within the realme, yea, and oft

oft to feede our enemies, and enrich themselves, by procuring licenses to carie them out, are to well known how hurtfull they be through all countries. As for Ingrossers, fore-stallers, regraters, lease-mongers, they are thought honest men. The lawyers of both sorts by feeding their Clients with faire words, and the Questmongers with fluttish shifts, making them belecue their matter to be good, & with long delayes, impouerrish the suters: and if he come to be Iudge in the same matter afterward, wherein he was a counsellor afore, he saith, I spake then as a counsellor, and now I must speake as a Iudge, and thinketh that he hath spoken good reason, as though God had made it lawfull at any time, or in anie case to beare false witnes or speake vntruthes. The Phisitian and the Apothecarie deale so cunninglie that no man espieeth them, and yet be as ill. The cleargie that will take the profit and refuse the paines, Lie at his ease from his charge and let his sheepe hunger, are not better then the rest. Pen-clearks, shirifs, bailifs, & summoners are not worthy to come to this companie, for they can returne *Non est inuentus*, when they stand and talke with him: and make cunning delayes, vntill they make men pay double fees for expedition. Worst of all commeth the common cutpurse the vsurer and his broker,

he standeth on his reputation, he sitteth highest on the benche, and looketh bigge; nay he is crept vnto meane mens dealings, he speaketh courteouslie, and dealeth cruellie: he defendeth his doings to be charitable, when it eateth vp house, lands, and goods, turneth infants a begging, and ouerthroweth the whole kinred: Captaines conuey as cunninglie as Iugglers with leger-demaine. Merchants and Artificers are so honest, that they may not be touched: they haue so few faults, that they cannot be told, and yet there could neuer be lawes enough made to bridle them, but they will creepe out. When receiuers are become deceiuers, controulers be pollers, Auditors searchers, and Customers looke through their fingers and keepe their olde custome: And generallie, *euerie man is a Theefe in his occupation*, as the common prouerbe saith, *there is craft euen in daubing*: it is to be feared, that as the course of a streame being stopt, it gathereth a great damme, and being let sodenlie goe, it ouerthroweth all in his way; so Gods anger being staied a time, the windowes in heauen being opened, it will powre downe on our heads plentifulle. How shoul Gods plague be farre from vs, when these cry vengeance daily? the theefe by the high way is not so ill as anie of those, that deale not vprightly in their vocation. For against a theefe a man may fight for his

his pursse wittinglie, and saie, master theete
 gramercie. If a man consider in how litle tents,
 Shops, Offices, and houses these men dwell,
 and how great gaines they get, he shall easilie
 see where the profitablest ground lieth in the
 Realm. If this people had such cause to crie out
 then on their Rulers, what cause haue we now
 here among vs, where not onelie the richer &
 mightier sort ouerload the poorer, but euery
 one in his degree vseth craft, subtilty, & deceit,
 to oppresse, vndermine, and scratch from o-
 ther, without respect of friend or foe, what
 he can, not regarding how he commeth by
 it, by hooke or by crooke, by right or wrong,
 be it short or long. Here is nothing spoken
 particularlie against any mans vocation or oc-
 cupation, nor anie man that dealeth honestlie
 in them, but generallie to note the generall
 faults of the offenders, that euerie man may
 looke into his owne bosome, consider his do-
 ings and amend one. If euery one wold amend
 one, all should be wel streight: but euerie one
 would amend another, see other mens faults,
 but not his owne, and therefore all lie still as
 they did, nothing amended, and euerie one
 maketh curtesie who shal begin first. *Sophony*
the Prophet complaineth of his time, & saith,
thy rulers are roaring lions, thy iudges are rauening
wolues, and will not leaue the bones untill mor-
ning: thy prophets are lewd and vncoustant, thy

Priests haue defiled the holy place, and broken thy law. Micheas crieth out and saieth: there is not a good man left on the earth, and not a righteous man among men, all lie in waite for blood, euerie man hunteth his brother vnto death, &c. God graunt our times were not like. Among vs it is merilie said of some, that *there be some Courts where law is executed without conscience: Another, where conscience is without law: the third where neyther law nor conscience; the fourth, where both law and conscience shall rule,* I can rather pray for, then looke for, vntill the last day come, when the righteous Iudge shall iudge both with law & conscience. In the meane time we may mourne, and turne vnto the Lord, that he may forgiue vs, and receiue vs in his manie and great mercies, for we are full of many and great miseries. The pride of women is through the fault of men, therefore they be blameles: God amend vs all. It is written that *Ioseph in Egypt vsed the people almost of like sort that they doe here, and yet is he praised & and these iustlie reprobued: which possiblie some marueile at, not vnderstanding the diuersitie of their doings. Ioseph laid vp corne in the time of plentie, when euerie man had ynough: these men did it at al times, without respect, in plentie and scarfitie. Ioseph brought the monie into the Kings cofers, to serue the common wealth: these men laid it vp in their owne Cofers, to their*

their owne priuate vse. *Ioseph bought their cattell for such price as they were worth: these men pay not the iust price for anie thing they take. Ioseph buieth their land and maketh the people bond vnto the King, restoring them againe the land, the King finding the seede to sowe, the people onelie labouring to till the ground. And where we thinke we deale courteoullie if we let them to halfe, the Egyptians haue the fourth part for their labour, and paie the king the fift part of the encrease, for the land and seede, but these men kept all in their owne hands. Ioseph bought not the Priests lands, but gaue them allowance of such things as they wanted out of the kinges store: and these men like vnto our daies, if they can scrape anie thing from the Church, that is a pastime among all other to laugh at, and thought best gotten. So much more is a minister of Gods Gospell thought meeter to be spoiled by these cutpursses, then Ioseph thought meete to doe to those Idolatrous priests. Ioseph opened his barnes in time of dearth, and sold liberallie to the needie: these men the greater that the neede was, the faster they lockt it vp, vntill they had their desire of the poore. Ioseph restored their land and tooke but the fift part of the encrease: these men restore nothing, and yet take interest. As this cruell dealing toward their breethren and countriemen, was thought straunge to be found amongst*

amongst this people, in the time that God had shewed to them such great mercies, in restoring them againe to their countrie, giuing them the liberty to build their temple and Citie, with great gifts, liberalitie, and fauour of the kings, vnder whom they were bondmen and slaues: So it is much more marueil, that among Christians, in the time of the gospel, so mercifullie restored vnto vs, & so free-ly taught, greater crueltie should be found & exercised, then among the hard harted Iewes or infidell pagans. But this is the common practise of Sathan, that in no age, people, nor countrie, he can be quiet to see Gods kingdom set vp and flourish, and his powre fall: but he will rage, storme, besturre him, and by al deuises that may be, and by all powre that he can ouerthrow it. And seeing this is no new thing but hath fallen out diuers times afore, let vs not now be astonied nor dismaied at it, nor murmure and grudge against the doctrine of our saluation, so mercifullie offered vnto vs, as though it were not the true word of God, because men liue so far contrary to that which is taught, and they openlie professe. The deuill is content, when he cannot ouerthrow the trueth of the doctrine, to deface it so much as he can, with the ill life of those that professe it. But the gospel teacheth vs what to doe in
 23.3. this case, saying; *doe as they say, but doe not as they*

they doe: The doctrine is good, though they be
 ill. The trueth and worthines of Gods word
 hangeth not on our life and doings, but our
 life anddoings should be reformed by Gods
 word: for that *is a Lanterne to our feete, and Psa.*
a light to our stepps, that we may know when
 we be in the right way and how to come into
 it. We must be iudged by gods word, & not it by
 vs: we must be ruled by it, and not ouer-
 rule it, according to our phantasies:
 we must hang on Gods true
 saying, and not on
 mans euill
 liuing.
 (*)



A TABLE OF SVCH POINTS
AS ARE CONTEINED IN
the second Treatise
(*).

1. *What oppression is.*
2. *It is not lawfull for anie man to oppresse another.*
3. *They which haue done wrong vnto, or oppressed anie, must make actnall restitution.*
4. *It is the duety of the Magistrate, to deliver the oppressed out of the hands of the oppressour.*
5. *The Magistrate looseth nothing by declining the oppressed.*
6. *Oppressours shall be grienouslie punished.*
7. *Oppressours haue no Religion in them.*



IThath pleased an English papist, to give out in print, that the Church of Roome doth both teach, and require actuall restitution, and that our church doth neyther. His speech of vs is verie slanderous, and my treatise against oppression, is argument ynough to confute him. If they of Rome teach and require actuall restitution, it is no worke of supererogation: they doe no more but their dueties. If we should faile in this cleare point, we deserue great condemnation at almightie Gods hands. I confesse that a man is good (& therefore iustified in Gods sight) before he doth good workes: but withall I set downe this, that good workes doe followe him that is truelie iustified, and that such as haue oppressed, or iniured any man, shall not be pardoned at Gods hand, vnlesse they make actuall restitution, if they be able to doe it. If any require prooffe of this, I referre him to this treatise of mine against oppression.

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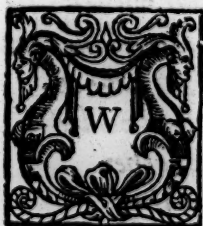


THE SECOND TREATISE AGAINST

THE FOVLE AND GROSSE
sinne of oppression.

Question.

Hat is oppression?



Answer.

It is vniust dealing, vsed of the mightier, either by violence, colour of lawe, or anie other cunning dealing, against such as are not able to withstand them. The ground of this definition is contained in these places of Scripture. Micheas. Chap. 2. verse. 1. 2. 1. Thes. Chap. 4. verse. 6.

2. *It is not lawfull for anie man to oppresse another.*

C*ome vs this daie our dailie bread.* Mat. Cha. 6. verse. 11. Euerie Christian desireth God to giue dailie bread, (that is, all things necessarie for this life) both to him-selfe, and to others: therefore no Christian is priuiledged to

to spoile another of his necessary food.

If one of vs must praie for the good of another, one of vs may not pray vpon another.

He that taketh his neighbours lining, is a murderer. Eccl.ch 34.v.2

Thou shalt not desire thy neighbours house, his field, &c. Deut. 5.21. If we may not desire his house, or land, then we may not spoile him of his house, or land, or inclose that ground, whereby the poore either by right are, or by right ought to be relieued.

If thou meet thin enemies ox, or his Asse going astray, thou shalt bring him to him againe. If thou see thy enemies Asse lying vnder his burden, wilt thou cease to help him? thou shalt help him vp with it againe. Exod. 23.4.5. Almighty God commaundeth vs to deale well with our enemies Asse, therefore we may not by vndoing our neighbour or spoiling him of anie part of his land or goods, make him an asse and send him a begging.

He that oppresseth the poore, reproveth him that made him, &c. It is a grosse sin to reprove the maiestie of God: therefore it is a grosse sinne to oppresse the poore. Prov. 14.31.

It was one of the sinnes of Sodom, not to reach out the hand to the poore. Ezech. 16.49. If it be a great sinne, not to relieue the poore, it is a very grosse sin to spoile the poore. *The bread of the needfull is the life of the poore: he that defraudeth* Eccl. 34.

fraudeth him thereof, is a murtherer.

There is a writ in England, which beareth this name, *Ne iniuste vexes*, that is to saie, *vexe not anie man uniuistly*: This is a godlie lawe, and is deriued from the lawe of God, which forbiddeth and condemneth oppression.

There are certaine beggers, which of purpose keepe their legges fore, to get money by it: If they are iustly misliked which gaine by their owne fore legges, what deserue they to be thought of, which gaine by other mens fore legges?

When thou sellest ought to thy neighbour, or buiest at thy neighbours hand, *ye shall not oppresse one another*. Leuit. 25. ver. 14. *This is the will of God, that no man oppresse or defraude his brother in any matter*. 1. Thes. 4. 6. Therefore men of trade may not gaine by litle measures, false weights, and false speeches, and othes, nor anie mightie men maie gaine by cunning dealing, by colour of lawe, or by vsing any violence what-soeuer.

3. *They which haue done wrong vnto, or oppressed any, must make actual restitution.*

GOD saith thus vnto Moses: *speake vnto the children of Israel, when a man or woman shall commit anie sinne, that men commit, and transgresse against the Lord, when that person shall trespasse*

pasſe, then they ſhall confeſſe their ſinne, which they haue done, & ſhall reſtore the damage thereof with his principal, and put the fiſt part of it more there-to, and ſhall giue it vnto him, againſt whome he hath treſſpaſſed. But if the man haue no kinsman, to whom he ſhould reſtore the dammage, the dammage ſhalbe reſtored to the Lord, for the Priests uſe, &c. Num. 5. ver. 6. 7. 8. We are taught in this place, to whom this actuall reſtitution muſt be made, euen to him, whom we haue iniured: if he be dead, we muſt reſtore it to his kinsman: if he haue no kinsman alieue, actuall reſtitution muſt be made to almighty God, for the Priests uſe, and in our time for the poores uſe.

Michah robbed his mother of 11. hundred ſhekels of ſiluer: his mother did not knowe that he had it, but he had remorse of that ſin, and made actual reſtitution. Ind. 17. 2

Samuel ſaith thus of him-ſelfe: Whoſe Oxe haue I taken? Whoſe Aſſe haue I taken? or whom haue I done wrong to? or whom haue I hurt? or of whoſe hands haue I receiued any bribe, to blind my eyes there-with? and I will reſtore it you, &c. I. Sam. 1
It is certaine that Samuel did not deale either corruptly or vniuſtly in his office: if he had, he would haue made actual reſtitution.

Zacheus was ſome times verie diſordered in his life: it pleaſed our ſauour Chriſt to be a good God vnto him, and to lodge in his
C house

house: *Zacheus* hauing feeling of his former wants vttered these words, *If I haue taken from any man by forged camillation, I restore him, foure folde.* If *Zacheus* of *Iericho*, after his conuersion, was content to restore foure folde, it is a good consequent, that they haue litle sense of Religion, which will not restore the principall.

Question.

If a man haue deceined, robbed or oppressed other men, shal he be pardoned at Gods hand, if he make not actual restitution?

Answer.

God will not pardon him, vnlesse he make actual restitution, if he be able to doe it: my reasons are these.

If the wicked restore the pledge, and gine againe that he had robbed, he shal surely liue, & not die, saith the Lord. Eze. 33. 15. Therefore, it is a sure consequent, that he shal not liue eternallie, which being in case to make actuall restitution, doeth it not accordingly.

Is not this the fasting that I haue chosen, to loose the bands of wickednes to take of the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed goe free, and that ye breake eery yoke, &c. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shal answere, thou shalt trie, and he shal say, here I am, &c. Esa. 58. 6. 9. If the oppressour must let the oppressed goe free, he must make actual restitution. If almightie God will not

not heare the praier of the oppressour (vntill he let the oppressed goe free) it is a necessary consequent, that God will not pardon him.

Augustine, is very flat for this point, if men *Epist. 54.* be able to make actuall restitution and doe it not, *penitentia non agitur, sed fingitur*: that is to say, their repentance is no repentance, and their sin shal not be pardoned, vntill actuall restitution be made.

Question.

If a man haue secretly either robbed or deceived another, and is very willing to make restitution, but cannot doe it with-out some worldlie danger, and disgrace to him-selfe, what must he doe in this case?

Answer.

Let him send that which he hath taken vniustly, by some trusty messenger to him whom he hath wronged, and let his name be concealed.

Question.

If he that hath taken vniustly from others, hath wasted all, and is not able to make restitution, what shall he doe?

Answer.

Such a one, must desire pardon very humbly at Gods hand, and water the earth with his teares.

4. It is the duty of the Magistrate to deliuer the oppressed out of the hand of the oppressour.

21. 12.

21. 17.

22. 17.

22.

22.9

Execute iudgement in the morning (that is; carefullie and without delay) and deliuer the oppressed out of the hand of the oppressour, saith the Lord, &c. Seeke iudgement, releue the oppressed, iudge the fatherles, & defend the widowe. Almighty God commaundeth the Magistrates to execute iudgement in the morning: therefore they must vse no delaies in doing iustice. God commaundeth the magistrates to seeke iudgement, therefore in cases of oppression, they must not stay till they be called for. God commendeth vnto the Magistrates al that are oppressed, but speciallie the fatherlesse and widowe, because they want the defence of their parents, and husbantes, and euery man goeth ouer, where the hedge is lowest.

Iosias executed iudgement & iustice, he iudged the cause of the afflicted & poore (saith the Lord of Iosias).

Iob saie: thus of himselfe: I deliuered the poore that cried, and the Fatherles, & him that had none to helphim, &c. I put on iustice, & it couered me: my iudgement was the eie to the blinde, and I was a father vnto the poore, and when I knewe not the cause, I sought it out diligentlie, I brake also the chawes of the vnrighteous man, and pluckt the pray out of his teeth, &c. It appeereth by this, that Iob was a worthie Magistrate: God send vs manie such as Iob was.

The Sunamite (whose sonne Elizeus raised
to

to life) sojourned in the time of famine seauen yeares in the land of the *Philistines*: in her absence, her lands and goods were vniustlie entred vpon: at her returne, she complained of the iniurie to *Iehoram* the King of Israel: *Iehoram* without delay commaunded an Eunuch to restore her goods and landes vnto her: Restore thou (saith *Iehoram*) all that are hers, & *2.Kings* all the fruites of her lands, since the day she left the land, euen vntill this time.

The Iewes in *Nehemiahs* time were greatly oppressed: *Nehemiah* was verie angrie with the Princes and rulers which oppressed them, *Neh.5.* and saide vnto them: you lay burdens euery one vpon his breethren &c. Restore vnto them this day their lands, their vineyards, their olives, and their houses.

If it be the magistrates duety to deliuer the oppressed, they must take great heede, that them selues be neither principals nor accessaries in the sinne of oppression. If they be guilty, iudgement shall be turned into wormewoode, and *Amos. 2.6.* the righteous shall be solde for siluer, and the poore for shaes: that is to say, filthy bribes shall be more accounted then mens liues, which are most pretious.

5. The Magistrate looseth nothing by deliuering the oppressed.

If he doe it with a single heart (beside the testimony of a good conscience which is a conti-

nuall feast) he may assure him-selfe of Gods fauour and blessing, and of the singuler liking of all Gods people.

2. *Iofias did eate and drinke and prosper, when he executed iudgement and iustice, when he iudged the cause of the afflicted, and the poore.*

5. *Iob deliuered the poore that cried, & the fatherles, & him that had none to helpe him, and the blessing of him that was ready to perish, came vpon him.*

Our souereigne Ladie Queene Elizabeth hath dealt graciously with manie poore suters at the Court, she hath spoken comfortablie to them, and procured restitution accordinglie. If it be no disgrace to this noble Ladie which sitteth vnder the cloth of estate, to deliuer the oppressed, it is no blot to inferiour magistrates if they do the like. If the Prince pleaseth God highlie, and winneth the hearts of her subiects soundlie, for releeuing the oppressed, it is verie certaine, that those Cormorants, which grynde the faces of the poore are accursed of God, and loose the hearts of his people. If the Prince sitteth fast in the seate of her Kingdome for tendering the case of the oppressed, can they assure them-selues of sitting quietlie vnder their vines and figge trees, which eate bread, baked with the teares of men? It is certaine, they cannot, for (besides the manifold curses of God and his people) their owne consciences doe mightelie sting

sting them, and are enemies ynough to torment them.

6. Oppressours shall be greivously punished.

Cursed be he, that remoueth his neighbours ^{Deu. 22. 17.} marke: and all the people shall say, Amen. If they are accursed by God, and his people, which remoue the marke of the land, they are more accursed, which take awaie house and land.

Oppression maketh a wise man madde. Madnes ^{Eccle. 7.} is a greivous punishment: God punisheth oppression by madnes, one grosse sinne, by another.

Ye haue builded houses of hewen stone, but yee shall not dwell in them: ye haue planted pleasant vineyards, but yee shall not drinke wine of them. The reason of this is set downe by Almighty God in the same verse, in these words: *your treadings are upon the poore: & you take from him burthens of wheate,* (that is to say, the necessary reliefe of him and his familiy.) If the taking away of burthens of wheat from the poore was so great a sin, the taking waie of arable ground (which by tillage and Gods blessing bringeth reliefe to a man and his familiy) is no litle sinne. ^{Amos. 5.}

They shall not mourne for him (saith God of Ioaachim the King of Iuda, which was a great oppressour) *he shall be buried as an asse is buried,* ^{Iere. 22.}

and cast forth (as a carrion about the ground) even without the gates of Ierusalem. Ioachim had closed himselfe in Cedar, but that was not able to keepe Gods iudgements from him.

ac. 2. 11. *The stone shall crie out of the wall, and the beame out of the timber shall answere it, &c.* As if almighty God should say, rather then the vile dealings of oppressours should not come to light, the stone shall cry out of the wall, I am built of blood and iniquitie, & the beame out of the Timber shall answere, I am built likewise of blood and iniquitie. If the stones and beames of oppressours houses, giue in their euidence (like honest Iurates) against such houses, the Oppressours must prepare themselues to heare this feareful sentence pronounced, by the Lord chiefe iustice of heauen and earth against them: *woe vnto him that buildeth a towne with blood, and erecteth a Citie by iniquitie.*

g. Epist. 2. *They which oppresse others, doe more hurt themselves, then those whom they oppresse: the smart of the oppressed hath an end, the smart of the Oppressour is euerlasting: for he heapeth vnto himselfe wrath against the day of wrath, and of the declaration of the iust iudgement of God.*

There were neuer any oppressours so many and mighty, but at the length they were met with. Gods iudgements haue feete of wooll, but they haue armes of brasse: It is long
ere

ere God begin, but when he striketh, he payeth home. *Esay. chap. 30. ver. 14.*

Wo vnto them that imagine iniquity, & worke wickednes vpon their beds: when the morning is light, they practise it, because their hand hath powre, and they couet fields, and take them by violence, and houses, and take them away: so they oppresse a man and his heritage: therefore, thus saith the Lord: behold, against the family haue I denised a plague, whereout ye shall not plucke your necks. Mich. 2. ver. 1. 2. 3. God be mercifull vnto vs and make vs afraid of his iudgements.

7. Oppressours haue no Religion in them.

God Looked for indgement, but behold oppression, for righteousness but behold a crying. &c. *Esay. 5. 7*
Iudgement & righteousness are the true fruits of Gods religion, therefore oppression is no branch of Gods Religion, and consequently, the oppressour is voyd of all religion.

Doe not all the workers of iniquitie know that they eate vp my people as they eate bread? they call not vppon the Lord: Psal. 14. ver. 4. Oppressours call not vppon the Lord, therefore they are void of religion: for inuocation is a principall and necessarie fruit of religion. If the oppressours say, that they stretch out their hands and make manie prayers, I graunt they doe so, but Almighty God giueth them this answere:

I will hide mine eyes from you, I will not heare: for *Esay. 1. 11*

your handes are full of blood.

2.3.4. *I will be a swift witnesse against those, that wrongfully keepe back the hirelings wages, and vex the widow, and fatherles, and oppresse the stranger, and feare not me, saith the Lord of hosts, &c.*

3.5. They which oppresse others feare not God, therefore they are voyd of Religion. If they say they feare God, they deserue no credite, because their doings confute their speech. A good tree bringeth forth good fruits, and a iustifying faith appeereth by good workes.

5.15. *The former gouernours did burthen the people, but so did not I (saith Nehemiah) because of the feare of god. If Nehemiah did neither oppresse nor deale hardly, because he feared God, it is manifest that oppressours feare not God, and therefore are voyd of religion.*

12.16. *When he (that is Iosias) iudged the cause of the afflicted, and the poore, he prospered: was not this, because he knew me? saith the Lord: But thine eyes and thine heart (he speaketh to Ioachim the King of Iuda) are but onely for thy conetousnes and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression &c. Iosias was a singuler defence to the oppressed, because he did know and feare God: Ioachim was a notable oppressour, because he did neither know, nor feare God, that is to say, because he was voyd of Gods religion.*

This which I haue set downe against oppression, may serue for oppressours to looke
vpon

vpon, & to reforme themſelues by. If it worke
 their good, it is happy for them : If it doe not,
 let them remember that dye they muſt, and
 that after death they ſhall haue a fearefull
 iudgement. The beſt aduiſe that I can giue to
 them which are oppreſſed, is that they deſire
 the magiſtrate, to be their defence. If by this
 ordinary meanes, they cannot compaſſe their
 owne, they muſt patiently beare iniuries, and
 commit their cauſe to almighty God, *Pſal. 56.*
 who hath their flittings in his regi-
 ſter, and their teares in his bot-
 tell, and will be ſurely, but yet
 iuſtly, reuenged of their
 Oppreſſour.

(*)

*Veritas & dulcis eſt, & amara. Quando
 dulcis eſt, parit: quando amara, curat.
 Aug. Epiſt. 211. ad Romulum.*





